



Executive Officer's Statement Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board July 21, 2005



Board Updates

California District Attorney's Association Meeting

The Board's Executive Officer, Karen McGagin, and Deputy Executive Officer for the Revenue Recovery and Accounting Division, Laura Hill, attended the California District Attorney's Association Summer Workshop on June 27. They gave a presentation at the Victims' Rights Committee meeting on the Victim Compensation Program, restitution fund, and the upcoming training activities regarding restitution imposition and collection. Updates on the Board's activities, including the status of the Restitution Fund and collection activities, and the plans for the 40th Anniversary of the Victim Compensation Program were highlighted. Attendees received copies of the restitution toolkit, a compact disk containing restitution information and forms.

Federal Grant Training

Dennis Boydstun, Deputy Executive Officer for Administration, along with Laura Hill, Deputy Executive Officer for the Revenue Recovery and Accounting Division, and Sara Murillo, Accounting Manager, attended the 2005 Regional Financial Management Training in Los Angeles on July 13-14. The training was through the U.S. Department of Justice and focused on the financial components of administering federal grants.

Victim Witness Coordinating Council Compensation Committee to Meet

The next meeting of the Victim Witness Coordinating Council's Victim Compensation Committee is scheduled for August 2, 2005. The committee, composed of Joint Power County Unit directors and Victim Compensation Program staff, meets quarterly to discuss compensation issues and provide important feedback to the Victim Compensation Program.

New Pilot Aims to Streamline Claims Process

In line with the Board's mission to provide timely and compassionate services to crime victims, the Victim Compensation Program has begun a pilot project to streamline eligibility determinations and payments. The Victim Compensation Program's Northern Region, which serves victims in 29 Northern California counties, launched the pilot in May. The goals of the pilot are to determine eligibility on complete applications within 30 days, identify the most effective way to pay emergency award applications, and validate the benefits of the claim processing methodology proposed in the new claims management system, CaRES (Compensation and Restitution System).

Usually when a compensation specialist reviews a claim at the Board's office in Sacramento, the same specialist handles the eligibility determination and verifies and pays the bills associated with the claim. In the new pilot, modeled after the Texas program, one team of staff members will handle all the eligibility decisions and a separate team will work on paying the bills.

Unlike Texas, California has an emergency award provision that accounts for approximately 30 percent of the claims currently processed at the Board. Testing of the

emergency award process will be incorporated into the pilot in three ways to test for efficiency, timeliness and accuracy.

It is hoped that the pilot program will create greater efficiency in the overall claim process. If successful, plans will be made to expand the pilot to other regions in the Victim Compensation Program.

CaRES System Development Moves Forward

The effort to implement the new CaRES system continues. The project is on course and is moving forward with the approval of the Special Project Report (SPR). Once the Department of Finance approves the SPR, a Budget Change Proposal and a Section 28 form will be submitted for approval.

A team of staff members who will use the system on a daily basis were identified as project champions. Their job is to test the system as it is developed and ensure productive communication between program staff and application developers. The Project Champions and System Architect are busy preparing for the arrival of the application developers, who are scheduled to come on board in August. They will be working side-by-side to construct and test the system this fall.

The new claims management system is a major priority for the Board and we are pleased with the development and construction of the system.